STONE WALLS

There's a saying I once heard that the beauty into which you're born is often the beauty you never see. Every day we see the history of our towns living, as 1770 white churches fill up with congregations whose names are the same as those in the records; as we see hearths and doorsteps made of soapstone quarried in the 18th century in Middlefield; as people still gather each spring for town meetings.

So here we have a beginning. A year ago some people believed that a documentary magazine of our hills and valleys could and should be done. Now, here it is. It's not exactly what we foresaw last Fall, but then almost nothing ever is, and maybe that's good.

All of us who have contributed to this issue share the belief that our small towns here in the foothills of the Berkshires hold in them secret resources for those who tilt their heads just a little bit to listen, who take a little extra time to see.

Now, as we till our gardens each spring, we begin to really understand the network of stone walls which unite our hills and valleys. Sure, we see them every day, but a closer look lets us see a little clearer that our fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers had that special combination of common sense, hard work, and artistic eye that produced perhaps the one thing most characteristic of our land. And that's why we named the magazine "Stone Walls". They carry in them the most solid values we have.

Ellie Lazarus

We were never really sure that there would even be a second issue of "Stone Walls". But soon after the first issue came out, I began to hear such comments as: "Oh! I know..., she lives in that big old white house down on..." or "Yeah! You know that bridge, the one where..." or "Grandma, did you really take these things for colds?" These were the responses which said "Yes", for which "Stone Walls" came into existence in the first place. It's this slightly closer look at the people and things very near to us which makes us that much more alive.

You'll find that this issue is different from the first issue in a few ways: there is more non-factual material because that's what the contributors emphasized this time; the layout is slightly different because two columns allows us more variety and there is some advertising because it was an economic must. When you think about it, the changes "Stone Walls" has made (and will make) reflect the nature of our Hilltowns: even though they are bound to change in little ways, their character and basic quality will remain, we hope, unchanged.

"Stone Walls" intends to be a quarterly magazine now and it needs you to pitch in to keep it going. If you have suggestions or contributions, or if you just want to let us know how you feel about "Stone Walls", please contact us. And I'd like to thank every person who takes the time to "talk" to us. Talking with you is the best part of it all.

Ellie

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Contents

2 STONE WALLS: A SYMPOSIUM........................Zenon D'Astous
Betty Jean Aitken
Hal Schmitt

7 MR. BELL AND MR. HOLLAND........................Samuel Quigley

9 THE WORTHINGTON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT........Lois Ashe Brown

11 EARLY WALK........................Ida Joslyn

12 FIRST DATE........................Greta Pixley

16 AND WINTER COMES........................Zenon D'Astous

17 DIARY OF ADDISON DWIGHT PERRY........................Olive Cole

19 HIRAM SMITH'S TOMB........................Grace Oppenheimer

20 WIND, WEATHERVANES AND THE STORMS........................Cheryl Wyman

22 OLD FASHIONED RECIPES FOR COMMON AILMENTS..........Alice Britton

24 LEGEND OF THE GREAT BEAR........................George Larrabee

27 HARVESTING ICE........................Doris Hayden

30 BATES DANCE ORCHESTRA........................Florence Bates

33 EVERYBODY'S GRANDFATHER........................Geoff Lynes

34 HAY........................Geoff Lynes

37 THOSE HEARTY PIONEERS........................Betty Jean Aitken

38 SCHOOL COMMITTEE OF 1854
BLASTS TOWN FATHERS........................Betty Jean Aitken

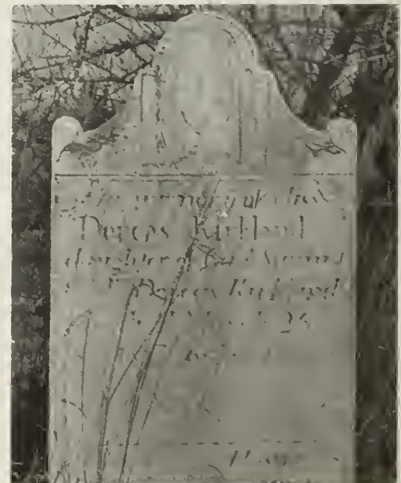
STONE WALLS - A SYMPOSIUM

A GATHERING OF STONES

by ***Zenon D'Astous, Sr.***

Sitting with my back to a sunwarmed stone wall, I find a placid peace, contemplating this heritage in stone, left to us by our forefathers. I also wonder how many crushed fingers, bruised knuckles, and broken toes — not to mention bad tempers — came from such a prolonged effort to clear this grave-yard landscape, called New England, called home.

From the four winds they came seeking freedom from oppression and new beginnings. Into Blandford the Donaghy's, Gibbses, and the Knoxes; men like Nathan Wright, and the Macks to Middlefield. Cottrells, Burrs, Joshua Robinson, the Frinks and Pettengill settled in Worthington. Monsons, Kirklands and Rudes like Huntington's three rivers and stayed. These men



and their families and others came to Russell, Chester, and Montgomery. They cleared a harsh and unyielding land: Our heritage from their labors; the neat squares of springtime meadows, fields of corn and clover and grazing cattle. Holding each tract of land in place, the gray embroidery of the stone wall.

To those of us here, now, stone walls have always been. To our forefathers the stones were a scattering of obstacles. And so the gathering began. From sunrise to sunset, stoneboats pulled by oxen and horses were loaded with stones that had lain on the land longer than any recorded history. These men and women — pilgrims, homesteaders, sod-busters, squatters, dirt-farmers — pioneers all by whatever name. They made foundations on which to build their houses, barns, churches, and schools. They came, the teachers, storekeepers, preachers, and carpenters. They built towns and stone walls, hundreds upon uncounted hundreds of them.

These walls were not all made to keep things out or in. Some were made to hold things up, like roads and stream banks. Some were wide, some narrow; others high or low. Some just start here and end there; a place to *put* the first stone and a place for the last.

Stone walls wander aimlessly through land now reclaimed by the forest. Some still stretch out in summer sun along serene green meadows, where wild morning glories and bittersweet vine cling to these ageless perimeters. "A wall of stone to mark my land from yours."

Stone walls caress the contours of the land in gray perfection and march along to the quiet euphony of the ages.

Stone walls have endured long after most man-made structures of that era have given up to decay. Lilacs bloom and lilies of the valley still grow in the shadow of a wall that marks the place of someone's long-forgotten birthright.

Like silent sentinels, stone walls stand over hill and valley guarding land holdings granted by kings of old. Through a length of years, some lay in disarray, their ranks broken by nature's ever-changing mood. Frostheaves, washouts, and sometimes just for the Hell of it, she shrugs her mighty shoulders, and stones roll to be lost among the leaves and ferns. Her gray bones carried others away and rebuilt them another place, another time.

Two hundred years have passed, and on many back roads small family cemeteries can be found. There, embraced forever in profound silence, are men and women who

built the lattice of stone that criss-crosses our region. The walls of stone they built so long ago surround them like massive arms clutching rusted iron gates.

Indeed the years have passed, but not the walls of stone, for each new generation claims them for their own.

* * *

THEY WORKED WITH STONE

by ***Betty Jean Aitken***

"They had to do something with the 'dang' things," one old-timer said, as he tossed another stone upon the moss-covered wall that has stood even longer than his own bent legs upon this Huntington countryside.

It's hard to think of the New England countryside without its miles of stone walls marking off the land. The early settlers and the farmers who followed must have spent many back-breaking hours digging and dragging the "whoppers" up out of the earth and into their proper place in the wall. After listening to the old timer's remark, I can see just why there are so many of these stone monuments left to remind us of the builders of the past.

In the early days of our country, man truly worked the land with his hands and used what it offered him . . . and stones were certainly in abundance.

Many of our stone walls were built with pride and not just piled helter-skelter. A good stone wall started with a trench which was dug down to the subsoil. Larger stones were first put in and then smaller stones. The art was in being able to lay the stone so that it touched as many others as possible. The stones must bear against each other and lean in with the odd size stones filling the center of the wall.

The larger stones were pulled from the fields with oxen and stone boats, which looked like a toboggan of sorts. After the stone was unearthed by hand, a chain would be flipped around it and the oxen would pull the troublesome fellow right up out of the ground and on to the stoneboat.

Through the years, trees have grown up between many of these old walls and have sent them tumbling down to rest in the pastures beyond, and people searching out just the right size rock for their own wall or garden have destroyed parts of these beautiful landmarks. Recently some have begun to realize their beauty and value to the generations that will follow, and are restoring them. One man doing this found some old coins in what must have been the remains of an old box. Perhaps after his long hours of labor, the builder felt it a strong place to hide his meager wealth. Later another man working around an old wall on his property unearthed an old bottle with a mite of whiskey still in it. Someone had tucked it safely away till later and no doubt forgot just where.

Each winter covers these old works of art with a warm blanket of snow, as if to protect them from further harm, and each spring they rise up again as reminders of the strong, hard working people who first came to our hills.

Land had to be marked off, cattle had to be kept within the boundary lines of a farmer's pastures, and what else did the early settlers have to mark their land? What else was there for the foundations of their homes, and later of the mills and little factories that sprang up along the rushing brooks and streams? Is it any wonder that they worked in stone?

Although there were plenty of stones around, and each year's plowing seemed to spring up another crop, it still meant a lot of *hard* work.

Each and every stone had to be brought to the place where it was to be used, be it a fence, a foundation for a home, or well, it had to be transported somehow. It must have been a slow trip with only oxen to pull the heavy loads to the building site.

Many of the old fieldstone foundations of former settlers can still be found along country roads, with the center square proudly showing where the family fireplace once stood.

Many can be found along Pisca Road on Norwich Hill and some of their corners are as true as the day they were lifted into place. Some of these foundations show evidences of a deeper dug room, and one can picture the root cellar filled with winter food supplies.

Another important use the early settlers made of this stone was in building wells, and, for many years to follow, wells were lined with field stone. The cattle needed water and if there wasn't a handy stream or spring in the pasture, the problem was settled by digging a well. One man digging took a great deal of time, and this was often done, no doubt, but two or three working together made the job easier.

First off came the start-in hole, according to my grandfather, who, as a boy, had helped his father in such an endeavor, and it had to be twelve feet across. After it got to be hard to throw the dirt over and out, a second hole, usually in the center, was dug.

Now the dirt could be tossed up on this shelf and the helper could then shovel that up and out. Long spades were used for this task. Sometimes even a third hole was dug and the second shelf used to toss the dirt up to the first, but this would be only for a very deep well. A man working alone must have thought he was digging clear to China.

Stone for laying a well was selected. Stones had to be uniform in size and tapering at one end. The pointed ends lay towards the center which made the circular form of the well. When the dirt was pressed against them from behind, they couldn't fall out of place. As one laid the stone, another would shovel dirt down and more rocks. The dirt would be worked in and packed down as they went along.

Even as late as fifteen years ago there were still many of these old stone-lined wells on Norwich Hill.

It can truly be said, "They worked in stone."

* * *

BUILDING STONE WALLS

by Hal Schmitt

When I first moved to this New England area, I was very much impressed by all of the stonework. As I wandered and hiked through the back-lands, I became more and more aware of the rubble stone walls, each stone bonded to another, fitted with precision and love. The rocky land provided our forefathers with plenty of stone, as they cultivated and cleared the woods.

During the month of November I had the chance to talk to a young man, Ben Brown, who has been building and repairing stone walls for several years. It was while he was helping a local farmer that he first became interested. They were repairing a stretch of tumbled down stone.

When I asked Ben what I would have to do to build a stone wall, he said, "Well, I guess, first you would put your stones right where you were going to work and spread them all around so you could see as many of them as possible. Whether you would build a bed underneath the frost or not would depend on the purpose. Like, if you were just building a stone wall in the woods to use up the stone in a pleasing fashion, you probably wouldn't bother."

"If you were building a stone wall for a house "I said, "would you go down beneath the frostline?"

"Yea" Ben replied, "I'd say, for a house, you'd go down four feet."

"That's so that the frost won't shift the stones, right?"

"I guess four is definitely enough, but if you were building anything with a stone foundation, you would not want the frost to kill it."

"Would you measure a certain width?"

I guess you'd decide on a width. I, personally, wouldn't measure it, just whatever looked like the right width for the right length I was going to build; you sort of decide those things in your mind."

"Do you do any leveling?"

"Only if I feel the stone is in an important place, otherwise just all by eye. The last stone on the top of a foundation, of course, you would want pretty level, and you'd use an instrument."

"Have you ever built a house foundation?"

"Well, right now I'm in the process of building a foundation for a house. It is not a solid stone foundation, just piers on the corners."

"Did you build the foundation for your own house?"

"Yes, it has dry stone piers; I went down two feet there, because I'm in a little pocket in the woods and the frost never penetrates."

"You'd have to use cement in building a whole house out of stone, right?"

"Yes, just in order to seal up all the cracks. Anything that is a wall containing your living space would have to be cemented, and that changes the principles a little bit, you know. But basically, it's the same."

"Would a chimney be the same?"

"Yeah, more or less. The main difference is that, in that case, you're chinking the cement, and your last stone you cover with cement; then, you lay another one on top of that. There is a lot more leeway, because the stone is pushed down into the cement without having to fit in place. So it is less important what you put where, or how it is put, because the cement binds it together. Whereas, if you're building without cement, just the shape of the rock has to distribute its own weight throughout."

What is it that inspires a man like Ben Brown to build stone structures? Is it a hobby or fantasy? Does he seek proof of his existence in something he has created with his own hands? Perhaps it is because Ben knows, like generations of men before him, that the stonework he builds will be standing — even and straight — long after we have vanished and been forgotten.

Mr. Bell and Mr. Holland

Excerpts from sketches printed in the Hampshire Gazette in 1870 by Samuel Quigley

Contributed by

Grace Oppenheimer

The following sketches were written in hours of illness as a mental diversion. There may be, and probably are, errors of detail. True in all important matters, it is believed they are substantially correct. If the perusal shall impart but a moiety of the pleasure the writer has experienced in their composition, he will be satisfied.

It was intended to confine these sketches to the first settlers of the town (Chester). This rule has been adhered to with a few exceptions, and only such as to render the narrative clear and lucid. They could be extended to much greater length; but the reasons which induced their composition at the present time have measurably passed away, and the pressing duties of the hour cannot be neglected or deferred. A century hence when the renovating hand of labor shall have rescued the soil of Chester from impending exhaustion and impoverishment; when multiplied and varied forms of industry shall line the banks of the streams whose solitudes are now disturbed by no sound save the dashing of the waters, and a new people shall occupy the places of the fathers, the files of the Hampshire Gazette may be examined, and this memorial of the men who felled the forest, built houses, and established educational and religious institutions, may be read with mingled interest and curiosity.

June 1, 1870

When Daniel Waldo of Worcester, and his associates, who held the title to much of the territory now known as Chester, opened it for settlement, Samuel Bell Senior, accompanied by several of his brothers, among whom were William and Aaron Bell, moved thither from Oakham, and selected a location in the northwestern part of the town. The whole region was then wild and sparsely inhabited, bears and wolves abounded, and many were the encounters he had with them while on their predatory excursions. He spent nearly one year solitary and alone, remote from any human habitation; the time was occupied in clearing land and erecting a dwelling. On one occasion when the snow was deep and the cold intense, he started with a companion from his log cabin, in search of game. The sun was obscured and the heavens were as lead, they wandered for hours through the thick forest over hills and through dales, and at nightfall became aware that they were hopelessly lost. In the meantime the cold had increased until it had become almost unbearable. Unfortunately their resources for kindling a fire were exhausted without producing that much desired result. The prospect was indeed gloomy and disheartening, the cabin of the nearest settler probably being many miles distant. Already his friend had fallen in a stupor — he was freezing to death. Mr. Bell perceived that the emergency called for energetic action, and after reflecting for a few moments, cut a stout birch switch, which he proceeded to lay with no light hand, upon the body of his companion. The

pain not only aroused, but enraged him, and he commenced a vigorous chase after Mr. Bell, the latter made a wide circuit round a tree, taking care to keep a little ahead of his pursuer. The lively exercise warmed their chilled and benumbed bodies. As often as they felt the stupifying effects of the cold, the switch was freely used and the race around the tree was renewed. Drearily passed the long, dark night, and when the sun at length arose, and they were able to make some observations of the landscape, they found that they were on the north bend of the Westfield River, about midway between the present villages of Huntington and Chester. Both were sincerely and deeply grateful for their preservation, and ever after regarded a birch rod with lively emotion. The writer distinctly remembers how his childish wonder was excited, as the silver-haired old man, after whom he was named, and upon whom he looked with reverence and awe, recounted the hardships and perils of his pioneer life. But these privations were of short duration, the region was rapidly settled, and the soil being new was fruitful and productive, and his accumulations of property was sufficient to satisfy all reasonable wishes. Regularly every year he made a trip either to Boston or Hartford with his fat cattle and the products of his dairy. He became a prominent man, and in connection with Dr. Phelps and two or three others, led the Democratic party of his town in the fierce conflicts which raged between democracy and federalism. He was usually one of the selectmen when his party was in power, and was respected and honored by all for his many virtues. Possessed of great sensibility, and unbounded kindness and benevolence, the tears of sympathy would roll profusely down his venerable face at the least recital of distress or suffering, and he was always prompt in affording the means of relief. When full of years, he went with hope and faith to his rest, a great concourse of people attended his funeral, and two sermons by different clergymen, were preached on the occasion. May his memory be always held in affectionate remembrance by his descendants.

The place now owned by George W. Holcomb, in what is called the North End, was the home of James Holland. Mr. Holland was a native of Ballygauley, county Tyrone, Ireland, of strongly pronounced Protestant convictions, emigrated to Oakham, married into the Bell family, and accompanied his brother-in-law, when they removed to Chester. He was somewhat obstinate in the maintenance of his opinions and regarded innovations upon the established order of things with great distrust and suspicion. Nevertheless, he was an ardent patriot, strongly attached to the principles of civil and religious liberty, and faithfully served in the army of his adopted country in the war of the Revolution. His courage and perseverance were indomitable. It is stated that, while residing in Oakham, he resolved one day, while salting his sheep, to visit a noted rattlesnake den which existed on one corner of his farm, and exterminate the reptiles. With characteristic intrepidity he stripped off his shoes and stockings, and being dressed in the customary short clothes of the period, the lower portion of his limbs was consequently

left entirely naked. Grasping a stout stick, he resolutely commenced the attack, and soon was busily employed. But while giving vigorous battle in front, like General Scott, he was stealthily and treacherously assailed in the rear. A rattler of enormous size fixed his fangs deeply in the calf of his leg. Only waiting long enough to take vengeance on his crafty assailant, he quickly tied a cord around the limb between the wound and the knee, with his knife exacted the bitten flesh, filled the cavity with salt, on which was placed a quantity of tobacco, and closely binding his handkerchief over all, leisurely proceeded homeward. No inconvenience resulted from the bite, and he ever afterward entertained the opinion that rattlesnakes were of but little account anyway.

The Worthington Volunteer Fire Department

by

Lois Ashe Brown

The most prestigious of all local organizations is the Worthington Volunteer Fire Department. No amount of money or social position can buy one's way in. To become a member, it is necessary to volunteer and assume full responsibility for attendance at both fires and regular meetings. No nominations or invitations are ever given. Each man must make his own decision. There is no pay, and lost time from regular employment is not covered. The rewards are to be found in self-respect, service, and fellowship.

In the approaching national Bicentennial year, the Worthington Volunteer Fire Department will be thirty years old. Prior to formal organization, Ken Osgood recalls that there was an appointed Fire Chief who took charge at fires and as a young fellow just out of school, he was one of these. After the water system was installed and hydrants were placed along the line through the villages of Worthington Four Corners, Worthington Center, and Ringville, hose stations were built in each of these locations. There was one at the Corners Grocery, one near the Harry Mollison residence at the Center, and one on Ring Road near the George Dodge residence. Each was equipped with four hundred feet of hose, nozzles, a Y, and a span of wrenches.

Former Chief Osgood reports that fire extinguishers owned by the Town and by the Water District were placed in strategically located homes, as many as six in some places and two with each of the water commissioners, and these people were expected to respond to fire calls with them. Fires in outlying parts of town were fought with bucket brigades. In hopeless situations, houses and barns were emptied of contents if possible. When the Dwight Perry home burned (stood on the site of the Ben Albert home on Old North Road and was the home of the grandparents of Mrs. George Torrey and Miss Olive Cole) Malcolm Fairman remembers being on hand to help and of how the dinner table was carried out into the yard "without even spilling the water glasses."

In the years after telephones were installed, alarms for fires were spread simply by ringing up Central in the Horace Cole home and the operator then on duty would call first those living nearest to the fire. Calls were also quickly placed to the stores at the Corners and at the Center to rally help in those days.

The summer of 1946 is remembered as an unusually hot dry period during which a fire burned over much of Indian Hollow. It was on June 11th that summer that lightning struck some cattle belonging to Spencer Parish over in West Worthington. While he had gone to see about them, a truck, loaded with hay and backed into his barn, somehow caught fire and burned up the barn and contents in spite of the best efforts of a bucket brigade. Ken and Pete Packard have the details of that fire.

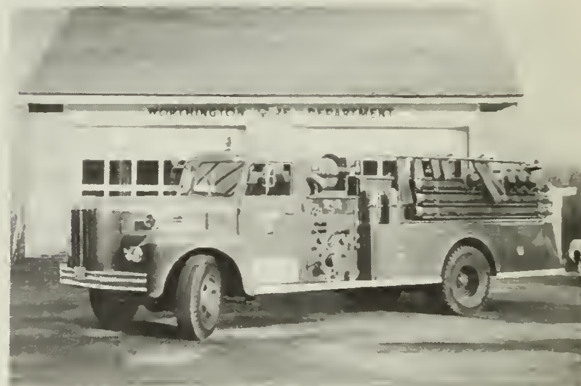
In August of that same summer following a brush fire at the John Jarvis farm on Old Post Road, Mrs. Carl Joslyn recalls that her husband and the late Wells W. Magargal were resting on a log after bringing the fire under control and got to discussing the idea of organizing a volunteer fire department. Thereupon, Mr. Magargal who was a selectman at the time, called a meeting for August 17th of all those interested in becoming volunteer firefighters for the purpose of organizing a fire department for the Town. Twenty-four men responded and it was a month later on September 26, 1946 that a constitution and by-laws were adopted. Mr. Magargal was father of C. Raymond Magargal and father-in-law of C. Kenneth Osgood, both of whom became charter members.

The following officers were elected: Chief, C.K. Osgood; ass't. Chief, Leon Palmer; 1st. lieut., C.R. Magargal; 2nd lieut., Lawrence Mason; and secretary-treasurer, Carl S. Joslyn. In addition, the following signed on as regular members: Horace F. Bartlett, Charles C. Eddy, Fayette R. Stevens, Merwin F. Packard, Harry L. Bates, George E. Torrey, Cullen S. Packard, George H. Bartlett, Arthur J. Ducharme, Eben L. Shaw, Richard Hathaway, Theodore Tatro, Warren E. Howe, Malcolm I. Fairman, Emerson J. Davis, Stanley S. Mason, Arthur J. Rolland, Walter H. Tower, and Franklyn W. Hitchcock.

In the beginning, the equipment included a four-wheel drive Chevrolet half-ton truck with a front mount 500 gpm pump and was equipped with axes, shovels, ladders, hose, etc. In 1951, a GMC two and a half-ton truck with a 1500 gal. tank was purchased. At about that time, a fire phone was installed at the home of Mrs. Guy F. Bartlett and she was in charge of it. At the same time, a fire phone was put in Packard's Store and was answered there during store hours. Lists of the Volunteers and their numbers were posted next to the phones and key people were notified who in turn made calls to those on their lists. Through the years, fire phones have been tended in the homes of the Carl Joslyns, the Richard B. Smiths, the Edward Chamberlins, and are presently in the homes of the Cullen Packards, the Leroy Ridas, the Gary Grangers as well as in the Corners Grocery and the Fire Station.

Former Selectman Henry H. Snyder donated the land for a fire house and construction was begun in the summer of 1949 on the acre and a half midway between Worthington Corners and Worthington Center. The total cost to the town was $7,100. Volunteer labor and donated materials through the years represent considerable value. The big overhead doors were given by the late Nathaniel F. Glidden and Mr. Roy W. McCann.

The fire station is a two-stall cement block structure with a pine-panelled meeting hall on the second floor. Through the efforts of Civil Defense Director Charles C. Eddy in 1956, the department procured "Snorky" a giant Air Crash Rescue truck, and completely rebuilt it for a fire engine, — all the work being accomplished by the members.



Present (1975) equipment includes a 1968 Maxim fire engine built to department specifications with a 750 gpm pumper and carrying a thousand gallons as well. The second truck is a 1942 Chevrolet 4x4 surplus army truck with a thousand gallon tank and a hi-pressure fog setup with an independent motor.

There is a roster of 45 volunteer firefighters at this time and they are called via a network of red phones at five places. There is now a radio base station in the firehouse with radios in both of the trucks. Worthington shares mutual aid with the surrounding hill towns, and due to its location also gives primary coverage to the River Road section of Middlefield and the Ireland Street part of Chesterfield.

Only three men have served the department as chief since the department was formally organized: C. K. Osgood who served for twenty-one years, Ashley Cole for six years and Gary Granger for the past three years. New members are given their badge and auto identification plate at the end of a six month probationary period and are then admitted on the basis of their show of attendance, interest and participation in the activities of the department.

Present officers are Fire Chief, Gary Granger; ass't chief, Henry "Bud"

Donovan; captain, Gerald Bartlett; 1st. lieut., James Pease; 2nd lieut., Timothy Reardon; secretary, Ralph Kerley; and treasurer, Leroy H. Rida. The inactive list includes the names of many of those who have been loyal and active members in past years.

Extracurricula activities of the Fire Department include the sponsorship of the Little League baseball teams, First Aid classes, a Muster Team, and sponsorship of three local persons in the Emergency Medical Training Course: Gail Higgins, Kenneth Beach, and Diane Gold. In addition to their fire fighting duties, the department is also called for other types of emergencies requiring prompt help as in instances of severe weather causing power shortages and flooded cellars. The department was called in 1952 when an upper floor in Frank Burr's barn collapsed and trapped several cows below.

The vitality of the Worthington Volunteer Fire Department is reflected in the activities, attendance, condition of the equipment, and the enthusiasm of the members. With a meager budget appropriated at town meetings, the members supplement that by their own efforts as needs arise. Following fires, appreciative homeowners usually make a donation to the department. Recently, a generator for emergency power was given to the department by Louis Hyde. Such support helps to give Worthington one more advantage not enjoyed by very many small towns.

* * *

Early Walk

by

Ida Joslyn

Five crows move silently
Into the morning
From the burnished trees.

Fifty geese lift to the south
Shouting goodbye.

And I
Earth-fettered, yearn
For just such wild security
Just such disciplined peace.

First Date

by **Greta Pixley**

I have always been sorry for those unfortunate girls who were denied the experience of having a sister — I wouldn't have traded the one I had for half a dozen more brothers — but I am sure, with both of us, that there were times when we would gladly have watched our sister off on a trip to Paris or anywhere.

There was the day I came upon my sister as she was reading to my mother from my own private notebook of "Tree Climbing Rules". They were nearly exploding with mirth over Rule No. 3, "Never climb more than one tree at a time." My eight year old dignity was sorely affronted, but I kept all my smoldering thoughts on the inside. I knew I had to ask only one little question to have had that rule completely vindicated; knew, too, that it would have meant only more laughter at my expense.

For more than half a century I have remembered the two trees, only a few inches apart, where I started to climb, and my slip and fall down into the narrow crevice between the trees. I have not forgotten my panic, the frantic struggling which only served to send me deeper into the crack, the time to wonder if the little body in the woods would ever be found. At last I stopped fighting and found that, by winding my arms around the tree trunks and pulling with all the strength I had, I could pull myself up, inch by inch, until I could reach the safety of a limb and drop to the ground. One little question, never before asked, "Did you ever get stuck between two trees?"

My sister and I loved to read. On summer Saturdays we would walk to the library on the Hill four miles away and walk back again with a treasured load of books. My sister was fourteen then, enough older than I to convince me that I was not to tell our father that a boy walked almost all the way home with us — and I'm sure it wasn't for the pleasure of *my* company. That night at the supper table I told about passing the house near the Hill where the men of the family trapped skunks for their fur. Though my sister never believed this, I didn't mean to say it. It just slipped out before I thought — "and even Carlton held his nose!"

On the other hand, there was once when I think the little sister was really appreciated. There was to be a supper at the Town Hall on the Hill. A young man who lived near us was going. My father gave his grudging consent to my sister's going with him, but (in the belief that there was safety in numbers) only if I went, too.

All would have been well except that, when the day dawned, I was laid low with the complaint which now we have at any time of the year and call twenty-four hour grippe or just "The Bug". Fifty years ago it was unheard of except in summer. It was called "summer complaint" or, more crudely and aptly, "back door trot," though it seldom left one with strength to trot or time to get to the back door and beyond.

Early in the day my sister began her chant "Eight more hours to get well in!" Every hour on the hour, all day long, the chant continued. "Two more hours, one more hour" while I groaned in misery. But when the fatal hour came, I dragged my tormented little body into the buggy after my sister, rode the four miles, then sat with empty plate while my sister enjoyed the delicious food provided by the ladies of the church. No, little sisters aren't always nuisances.

The years passed as they have a way of doing and I, too, reached the age of fourteen. Unlike today, dating in grammar school just wasn't considered, but I was now in High School. That winter our "bus"

came at 7:30 — a low, enclosed sled, horse-drawn and unheated. Winter roads were not kept open for cars — ten cold miles each day; we earned our education!

It was in January or February when a neighbor told my mother that her son was planning to ask me to go to a play in Pittsfield with him. It was, therefore, no surprise when he asked me, and we had time to choose from my scanty wardrobe what would be best to wear. Oh, for some of today's insulated clothing!

It was after two on a Saturday afternoon that we met at the Deer Hill House. There were the long wood sleds, with planks between, having a change from dragging logs in the woods. There were wooden boxes for seats, covered with a few (far too few!) blankets. There was Mr. Devlin, the driver, with several teams of heavy work horses hitched in tandem. There were about twenty passengers, some young people, but as many or more of the frankly middle-aged, including the boy's father. Winters were long with no television or movies, and older people, as well as young, welcomed a change.

The day we had chosen was sunny and no one minded the crispness in the air. We stopped in East Windsor for more passengers. With songs and laughter and the creak of runners on snow, we proceeded, but at what a slow pace!! The horses, trained in the woods, never changed from a slow, one-foot-after-another walk, even going down hills.

The sun had gone down behind the hills when we reached Dalton, twelve miles from home. As if by magic there was a warm, brightly lighted trolley waiting for us. The six miles to Pittsfield seemed to take no time at all. Then supper at a restaurant — another first for me — and on to the theater!

To one who had seen only one early movie, the Colonial Theater with its carpets, gilt and plush, the big stage with its changing scenery and, above all, the real actors, was almost unbelievable. I was transported to another world, a springtime world of young people's fun and sadness with everything ending in happiness. I can still see one scene — a young girl singing and swinging in a real swing with ropes made of flowers. She was so lovely; it seems as if she must still be swinging there and not now a woman older than I.

The play ended, as all wonderful things must, and soon we were leaving the warm trolley in Dalton. The horses had rested and been fed but their plodding walk was unchanged as we started up the long hill to Windsor. We had changed worlds again; now there was the cold.

Halfway between Dalton and Windsor, when you are riding home after a long day of working in heat and humidity, there is a spot where the air changes. Suddenly there

is a lift to tired spirits, you think happily of an evening in your own hills, knowing now that the heat doesn't last forever.

In winter, too, you reach the same spot. You check your comfortable car to be sure none of the windows are open a crack, push the heat lever down as far as it will go, and drive on, feeling the force of the wind shake the car, and rejoicing because you are inside and warm.

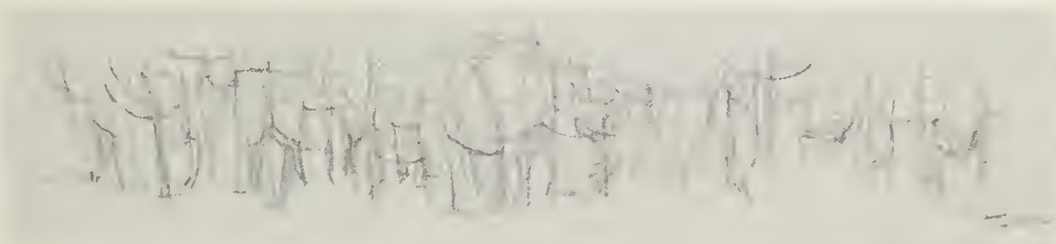
We had no windows, no heat lever to adjust, only the wind and the cold and the man in the moon staring down at us. No one laughed or sang or even talked — we were too cold. We young people rode until our feet were lumps of ice, then jumped off the sled and stamped along behind until enough feeling came back so that we knew we had feet again. The older folks, too tired to stamp, just sat and endured. If the boy and I held mittened hands as we stamped along, I have no memory of it. I was too young and too cold. I can't ask him if he remembers; he has been sleeping for years in our little cemetery near his father and mother.

It was four o'clock in the morning when the boy left me at the door. My mother, listening from her nearby bedroom, said that my teeth were chattering as I thanked him. I stumbled to bed, thinking that I never would be warm again.

The next thing I knew I could hear someone singing. I looked at the clock — four o'clock. I had slept the clock around! I listened, someone was still singing. The tune was "Three O'Clock in the Morning," but the words were different:

"It's four o'clock in the morning,
We've ridden the whole night through.
Daylight soon will be dawning,
Just one more ride with you.
This night has been so entrancing,
Seems to have been made for us two.
I could just go right on riding,
Forever, dear, with you."

My sister's turn to tease had finally come. That song is still ringing in my ears. My first date was over, just a memory never to be forgotten.



And Winter Comes

by

Zenon D'Astous, Sr.

The late summer browning of harvested fields has run its course,
and new life appears but only briefly.
Winter rye pushes up through the wet cold earth,
green and lush like the breath of a lost spring.

Between the furrows of newly plowed earth,
puddles of water hold a patch of blue sky
And the rainbow reflection of autumn leaves,
at night the gold of an amber moon.

In time the leaves are gone and the mountains,
gray as granite walls, encroach on the valley.
The river reflects the somber mood
a blue haze cloaks the day in the quiet euphony of deepening autumn.

As the days march toward early winter,
rain squalls turn to snow flurries.
Reflective pools turn to icy mirrors, wet earth to frozen clods
and a lonely figure stands where all else has fallen.

In wind swept field the scarecrow
looks with lifeless eyes on lifeless landscape.
Crows drift down with the wind
and settle mockingly on tattered tired arms.
Nothing to defend now,
for all that is left are the wilted remains of summer's glory.

With eyes fixed like that of a dead hawk
he looks into the nothingness of night.
And winter comes and covers all the land,
the new plowed earth, the tender green of the rye
and the scarecrow with frozen tears in sightless eyes.

From the diary
of Addison Dwight Perry

Contributed by **Olive Cole**

1860

January 1

New Year's Day. Did not attend church. Read one chapter in Bible, several Hymns, the Springfield Republican and some old religious newspapers. Weather cold. Had to carry fire into the cellar to keep it from freezing. Resolved to behave myself and endeavor to do my duty this coming year.

January 2

Tremendous cold and blustering. Did my barn chores. Packed pork in bbl. Subscribed for Springfield Republican. Paid for paper, minus the postage. Bricked up pipe hole in south room. Read two chapters in the prophecy of Isaiah. Wife tried lard. So cold had hard work to keep warm in my old kitchen.

January 12

Chopped in the woods. Went to J. Kenney's in the eve, called at the store and bought a plug of tobacco at Coles, price 6¢. Wife fixed little T.W.'s dress to have his likeness taken. Weather misty and cloudy in A.M. Fair with some wind in P.M., a company of 16 couples including married and unmarried, went sleigh riding.

January 13

Went with my family to the artist A.M. Meritt and had four likenesses taken, two of myself, one of wife, one of T.W. Expense of the same $1.45. Wife visited at Tinkers. I, too, and did nothing to speak of. Got hold of "Scottish Chiefs" and sat up till midnight reading.

January 14

Became so bewitched with novel reading that I spent a large portion of the day reading "The Scottish Chiefs." Finished one volume and glanced over the other. Bought a bunch of matches. Price 10¢. Weather cloudy commencing a snow storm at evening.

January 15

Weather very pleasant. Did not attend church. Read "Scottish Chiefs." Finished second volume. Read one chapter in "New Testament."

January 23

Weather pleasant, little colder. Chopped in the woods all

Perry house, remodeled, stood where Ben Albert's house now stands in Worthington. Perry house burned in winter '97-'98.

day. Headed a petition to the legislature for an act of incorporation of the Green Mountain Aggr. Society. Christened Jimmy.

January 24

Weather mild. Chopped in the woods in the A.M. Drew three loads of wood in P.M. By neglecting to repair my sled runner in season, I shall be compelled to put on a new shoe before I can draw any more wood. Wife received a visit from Grace Tower in afternoon.

January 25

Weather warm. Quite windy. Attended J. Adams' auction. C.B. Tower bought 1 pr. 2-year-old steers, price $70-1/2. J.H. Campbell, a yoke $73. Wm. Stevens a yoke, $90. Cows brought $30. average. Nice 6-year-old, Silas Marble's, brought $35-1/4. Farrow cow, 8-yr.-old $27. Bought 1 doz. buttons for overcoat 15¢

January 28

Weather chilly. Snow storm in P.M. Jake Bartlett led his colt and left it tied in my barn. A straggling pauper called upon me in the evening. Gave him supper and took him to A.J. Tinker's for lodging and breakfast. Did but little work. Caught a cold.

February 10

A violent gale of wind commenced early in the morning. Upon going out in the morning, found 38 ft. of my large barn unroofed on one side, a clear sweep of everything, rafters and all, laying promiscuously in one heap of ruins. The gale continued during the day. Pricked my foot with pitchfork.

February 11

C.B. Tower generously rallied my neighbors who generously responded to the call, and assisted me to secure the remaining portion of the roof by replacing the rafters and boarding the roof. Four rafters were broken, two demolished. Some of the falling timbers struck my sheds injuring them some.

February 12

Did not attend church. The names of those persons who assisted me yesterday are as follows: C.B. Tower, Galen Kenney, W.E. Tower, W.H. Bates, C.H. Bates, M. Bates, F. Robinson, Asa Bartlett, Jotham Randall. All of whom I shall hold in grateful remembrance.

February 17

Board of Selectmen met in the afternoon. Made out warrant for the annual meeting. Revised Jury box. Received a letter from Rockford, Ill. Bought a bottle of syrup for wife (charged). Wife scared dreadfully by a straggler yesterday. Snowed in deep today.

February 21

Snowed all day. Shoveled snow off roof of barn. Starkweather came here in the P.M. Studied law concerning support of State paupers. Issued our warrant for school meeting for Dist. No. 1.

"Wife"

February 27

Noyes, Jake, and Henry helped me shingle in the P.M. Weather warm and windy. Sold C.A. Carr one bushel of apples for 60¢. Wife washed and ironed and broke my gold pen and said she was sorry.

March 5

Weather pleasant. Attended Town meeting. Declined being a candidate for the office of selectman and assessor. Was chosen highway surveyor. Paid D.T. Hewitt due him $3.25. Received $2.00 and borrowed $1.00. Signed for N. newspaper.

March 11

Did not attend church. Weather squally and unpleasant. C.B. Tower called for his paper.

Mem. . . . must economize with regard to expenditures, especially store bills. My acct. with S. Cole must not reach so high a figure the coming year.

May 22. Rain.

Rainy in the morn. Cut potatoes for seed. Hauled manure. Harrowed and covered manure in the P.M. Weather clear at eve. My work is very much behind my neighbors. Must make an effort to catch up.

* * *

Hiram Smith's Tomb

Contributed by **Grace Oppenheimer**

Much controversy has gone on in the past few years about the Hiram Smith tomb, how it came to be, and what type of a man would care to be buried in a granite boulder in a rather isolated spot.

Hiram Smith, son of Joab and Elisabeth, was born September 2, 1795. He never married. He was a farmer who spent his whole life in the township of Chester. When he was about five years old, his mother took him to a funeral. It had rained and the grave was filled with water. Buckets were used to bail out the water, leaving a muddy hole which the casket was sunk into. It left a definite mark on Hiram and as he matured it continued to bother him.

One day as Dr. Thaddeus DeWolfe was making his rounds, he saw Hiram beside the road and invited him to ride with him. As they traveled over the country roads the old Doctor realized something was bothering Uncle Hiram (as most folks called him), and, with a little encouragement, Hiram unloaded his problem to his friend, ending with "No, doctor, I don't want to be buried in the earth and I don't mean to be and, what's more, I won't be." He continued on to tell of the granite boulder in his pasture large enough to hold "Issy," his sister (Isabel Toogood), and himself, the last of the family. His idea, he was afraid, would make tongues wag and people would think he was insane. The doctor assured him that this was not "a hair-brained idear" and people would not think him insane. What a load it took off Uncle Hiram's mind. That summer skilled workmen, from the neighboring city, opened up the dark interior of the boulder. Residents in the neighborhood as well as outsiders from the city came to watch the progress, bringing basket lunches and enjoying a day's outing. It took two years to complete the 7 ft. 2 in. long and 4 ft. 5 in. tall opening. The old sister died the following year but was not buried until her brother's death. For four years the granite boulder stood empty.

One night after a very heavy snow fall and with the wind blowing a gale, the doctor had sat down to relax, and commented "God have mercy on any one exposed to the fury of this storm". After the rest of the family had retired, he sat for awhile with his book. When the latch of the outer door rattled, the doctor thought it was only the wind, but no, the inner door was opening. Four men, covered with snow from head to foot, long whiskers, like icicles, hanging on their breasts. "It is Uncle Hiram, doctor." They had started out about 5:00 o'clock and

it was nearly midnight. It wasn't fit for man or beast to go out but a man was dying. Three yokes of oxen, eight men, and the doctor, shoveling, shouting, and cheering, encouraged each other. They arrived in the early morning hours at Uncle Hiram's. He was sinking but would not give up until his old friend, the doctor, arrived. Some people think that Hiram Smith was encased in granite so the devil couldn't get at him, but this is false as his last words to the old doctor were, "I'm going up to meet the bridegroom. I'm going to be dressed all in white for the marriage." This was not a man afraid of the devil, but one whose faith in God's promise was firmly established. Uncle Hiram's body was put in the earth before its final resting place in the granite tomb.

The tomb is located off the Maynard Hill road. The path, marked by paint and strips of fluorescent ribbons, is easy to follow. The pasture has long since grown up and, where once cattle grazed, now lumbermen have removed trees of great size.

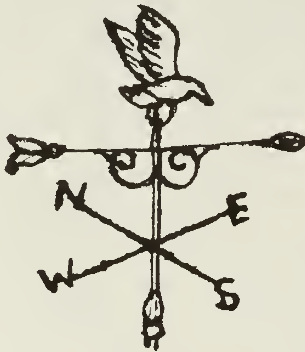
The source of information I used, with some direct quotes, was a paper written by Sarah DeWolfe Gamwell, daughter of Doctor Thaddeus DeWolfe. She had such a close relationship with Hiram Smith and his family, that I feel it is far more accurate than most of the stories people have conjured up. She wrote this story a few years after Hiram Smith's death.

According to further information we have received, there are only two such known tombs in the United States.

* * *

Wind, Weathervanes and the Storms

by Cheryl Wyman



Anyone who's ridden the bumpy back roads around this area has probably seen and admired the many old farms typical of the countryside.

But have you noticed, atop the barns and proudly airing themselves in any weather, the menagerie of barnyard and even some untamed animals? The ones that silently tell of every breeze and each whisper of the wind?

The well-being of farm, family, livestock, and crops depends greatly upon weather prediction and whatever the wind brought their way. Without the weatherman and television or the radio to bring news of upcoming storms, dryspells, or sunny days the farmer had to rely upon his own knowledge of weather and what each wind could bring. The weathervane was his biggest aid in weather forecasting.

The weathervane is certainly one of the oldest weather-forecasting instruments. It has also become a landmark of sorts, for the weathervane usually sits up higher than the roofs of the farm itself. Thus being the first thing one would see when approaching the farm, even from a distance. The style and significance of the vane that each farm had depended upon the type, locality, and wealth of the farm.

Depending upon the locality of the farm, winds from different directions mean different things. Storms, sunny weather for a while, dry spells, all play important parts in the produce of the farm; especially if the farmer could predict such weather was coming.

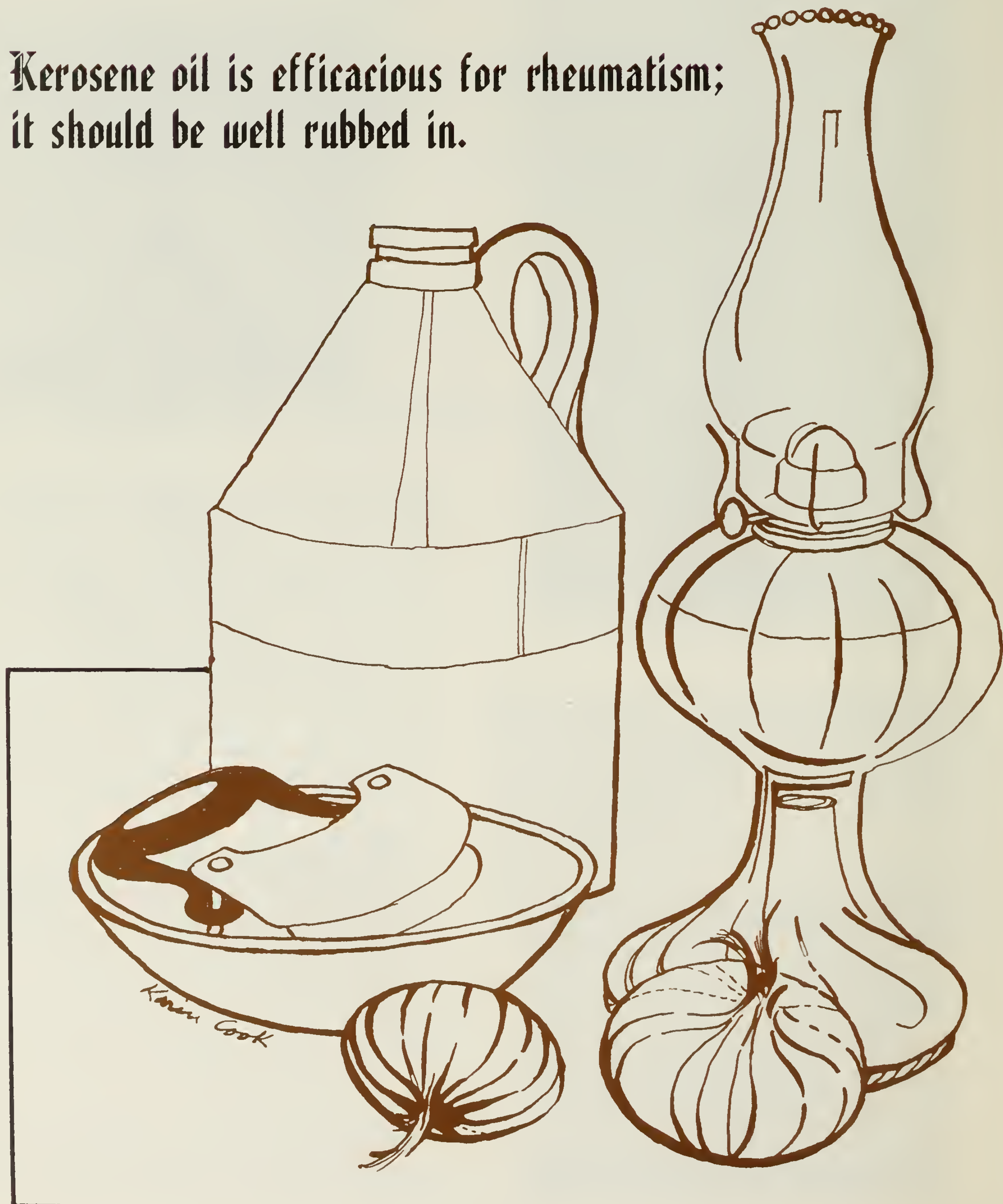
In this area the most popular vane is that of a cock; the other popular animals to sit and swing with the breezes are cows, horses, pigs, fish, and even some eccentrics might have eagles and other free-spirited birds on the wing. The type of farm might well be depicted by the weathervane. Horses sitting atop of horsebarns, cows atop of cow-farms, and pigs watching over pig farms. Even churches have weathervanes which symbolize the religion of its congregation. A fish is the symbol of christianity and may be seen swimming in a sea of clouds above the steeples.

The legend of weathervanes should not be taken so lightly as just another pretty horse on top of the barn; but rather as an important part of farming of years ago.

* * *

OLD FASHIONED RECIPES

Kerosene oil is efficacious for rheumatism; it should be well rubbed in.



for common ailments

by Alice Britton

Itch Ointment:

Unsalted butter 1 lb., Burgundy pitch 2 oz., Spirit of Turpentine 2 oz., Red precipitate juices 1-1/4 oz., Melt the pitch and add the butter stirring well together, when a little cool, add the spirit of turpentine, and lastly the precipitates. Stir till cold. This will cure the itch and many others on the skin, such as pimple patches, etc.

Cure for Felons:

Poultice with onions 3 or 4 times a day will effect a cure. No matter how bad a case, lancing will be unnecessary. This is a speedy, safe, and sure cure.

Linament for the Spine:

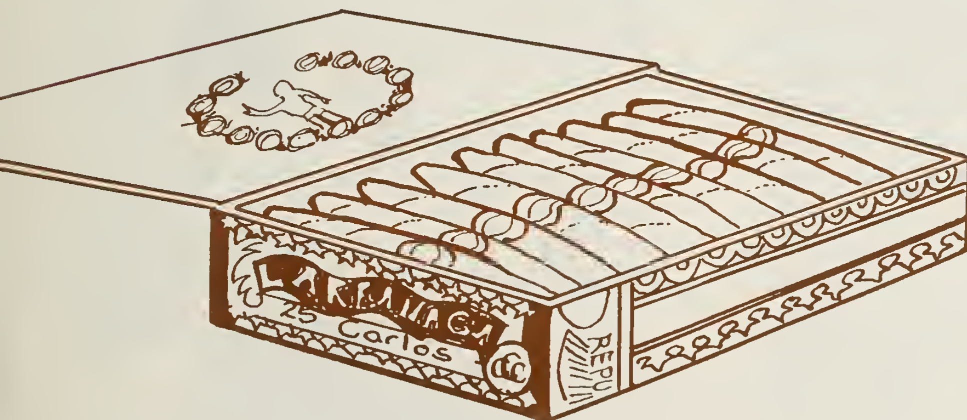
1/2 pint of N.E. Rum
1/2 pint Cider Vinegar
1/2 pint Rain Water (boiled)
1/2 oz. of tincture of Red Pepper
4 tablespoons of salt

Rub this thoroughly on the spine 2 or 3 times a day. Take something warm into the stomach at the same time. Be sure to use it freely, night and morning.

Cure for Dropsey:

The ashes of the best Spanish Cigars will invariably cure dropsey. That from 1 to 4 oz. a day.

An old Scotchman says it was never known to fail a cure unless the patient was very near to death before taking it.



THE LEGEND OF

MASSA MOSQ

(The story of the Great Bear)

by George Larrabee

The following tale is taken from an Iroquois and New England Indian legend that was beyond a doubt told by the native Mahican and Pocumtuck Confederacy Indians of our own area of Massachusetts. The first part of the story has been related in modern times by Aren Araweks, a Mohawk of Akesasne (the St. Regis Reservation in New York). It is identical to the tale thought to have been written down by Captain Hendrick Aupaumut, a Mahican chieftain of the early days of the United States. Apaumut's telling of the legend covers the Mohawk version, but also goes beyond it in attributing snowfall and maple sap to the Great Bear. Since the Indians further to the east were closely related to the Mahicans, the Squaheags of Northfield, and the Woronoaks of Westfield being especially closely related to the Mahicans, we can be sure that the legend was common to all of the tribes of Massachusetts.

ONCE UPON A TIME, in the early days of the world, there lived a peaceful tribe in happy contentment. Enemies were few, and game was abundant in the woods. The streams and lakes were filled with fish. Sometimes the sun was blotted out by great flocks of ducks, geese, and pigeons. The people lived in a village of sturdy bark houses, around which, as a precaution against any surprise attack by enemies, they had erected a stout log barricade. Beyond this palisade there were fields planted with "The Three Sisters," maize, beans, and squash, which were tended by the women. Smaller plots were planted with *wuttoohpooomweonish*, or tobacco, which was cared for by the men. Life was good.

But an evil time fell upon the people of the village. Out of the dark forest there came a monster bear, bigger than thirty ordinary bears put together. The hungry monster hunted game remorselessly to fill its huge stomach. Soon the hunters of the tribe could find no game anywhere around the village. They had no meat for their families. As this happened in the Spring, when the winter's supply of jerky and dried beans and maize had already been used up, and the wild plants that could provide greens were only the tiniest sprouts, the people were soon hungry. If the Great Bear did not go away soon, allowing game to return, then the tribe would starve.

The head men of the village took council. Since the bear showed no sign of going away, and would probably attack the town itself when it had consumed the last of the game, the warriors must go out and kill the bear.

A brief war dance was held, and the warriors went out against the Great Bear. They soon found the monster and attacked with arrows and spears, but they could not

kill it. In fact, its hide was so thick that they couldn't even wound it! Just the opposite happened. With one swipe of its mighty paw, (bigger than a Man's snowshoe), the bear could kill more than one warrior at once.

Carrying their wounded with them, the war party returned to the village in dismay. Loud and shrill was the keening of widows and orphans that night. The bear ate the warriors that he had killed, and prowled close to the village. The people could hear his cough in the dark outside of the palisade!

The warriors went out against the bear again, but the same thing happened. More warriors were killed and others had to be carried back, their leg or arm bones broken.

The situation looked hopeless. The bear could be heard growling outside the palisade now, almost every night, and more and more people sickened because they had so little to eat.

There were three brothers in the village. These brothers were among the few warriors still not wounded by the bear. They lay in their beds most of the time, weak with hunger.

One night as they lay sleeping, they all had the same dream. They dreamed that they had seen a star fall from the sky and then they had gone forth and killed the Great Bear. They skinned the bear and cooked the meat. There was plenty to eat for all!

When they awoke, they told each other about the dream. Since they had all three dreamed it at the same time, they said:

"It must be true!"

Therefore, they remained outside all the next night, and the next, around a small fire to keep warm. They waited for the falling star. And, sure enough, one night they saw a star fall from the sky. That was the sign!

"What do we do now?" one asked. But no answer came. "We can't stay here," another said. "Let us hunt the bear," said the third. "No, we will only get killed if we do," said the first. "Let us go to where the star fell on the earth," said the second. "Yes," said the third. "Perhaps that will give us the answer."

So that is what they did. Since the bear was, at the moment, not around, they escaped safely from the village and travelled in the direction where the star had fallen to the earth. After a while they came upon it. It lay smoking in a crater.

They still did not know what they should do. So they sat on the edge of the crater and lit their small travelling pipes. They smoked quietly and now and then nibbled on the handful of dried maize that each had taken from the last of the tribal food store. As they did so, the meteorite cooled and stopped smoking.

Curiosity impelled one of the brothers to climb down into the crater. He looked closely at the great jagged stone that had come down from the sky. It was oddly shaped, having holes in some places, and sharp jutting points as big as spear and arrow points in other places. The brother touched the meteorite, which was now only warm.

"These points are very hard and sharp," he said. He knocked one off with his stone tomahawk. "Yes," he said. "Much harder and sharper than our bone and antler arrow points."

All three brothers got the same idea at once. "Yes!" they cried in unison. "Let us make arrow heads out of them!" They took the old points off their arrows and spears and cast them away. They knocked points off the meteorite and fixed them on to the shafts.

"Now let us hunt the Monster Bear!" they said.

They travelled back to the village and soon found the tracks of the bear. They weren't hard to find. It wasn't long before they caught up with the bear. The monster saw them and started toward them. "This will be easy," thought the bear, seeing only three warriors. He growled and charged!

Did he get a surprise! The brothers shot

their arrows, and sure enough, the arrow-points from the sky penetrated the bear's thick hide. He felt their sharp sting! Then the brothers lifted their spears. The big spears would surely kill the monster, huge as he was. The Great Bear saw the spears, which looked like great arrows. He bit in half the arrow shafts, knowing that it was the arrows that were hurting him. He had never felt pain before, and became afraid. He turned from the three brothers, and ran the other way!

The three warriors gave chase. Since the monster had killed all the game in the woods, they would kill him and use him for meat before everyone starved. His fur would make blankets for twenty families. And his huge teeth and claws would make gifts with which to console the widows and orphans of the warriors he had slain.

The Great Bear ran on and on for miles, but the three brothers kept after him. To conserve their strength, they spelled each other, one lagging behind while the other two kept after the bear, making him keep running and not giving him a chance to rest.

The monster knew they would soon catch up to him, for he had to rest sometime. Therefore, to escape, he ran in a straight line. Now, as you know, the world is the back of the Great Turtle. By running in a straight line, the bear would come to the edge of the world. This was what the bear did. He came to the edge of the turtle's shell and jumped off! He jumped into the sky and kept on running.

But this did not save the Monster Bear. You know, when you get to running for a long time, you get into a trance state, this is what happened to the three brothers. They went into such a trance that they came under a spell, and were able to leap off the edge of the world, too. They leaped into the sky and kept right on after the bear.

On a clear night you can see them in the sky. The three brothers, with the bear in front of them, are called the Big Dipper by the white people. The four stars of the dipper are the Great Bear, and the three stars of the handle are the three brothers.

Now, when people or creatures go off into the sky and become stars, they dare not break the spell that enabled them to rise so high, or they will fall to earth as a comet, being burned to a cinder. The spell continues, and the new stars, fixed in the heavens forever, are now cosmic beings. As such they are bound to have an effect on the Creation. Because they are living beings who are not dead, they must continue to create, which is the mission, and, in fact, the purpose of the living.

Cosmic beings of course have much greater power than mere mortals. It is to be expected, therefore, that the three brothers and the bear should change life on earth for all time. Though their company was lost to their friends and family back on earth, their power of creation was now so vast that they came to influence the lives of not just those few they had left behind, but of everyone and everything.

The three brothers kept pursuing the bear all spring and summer. It seemed just another hour to them, but time is different in the heavens. To us the time would be counted in months, not in minutes. By the time autumn had come the bear had grown so tired that he came within their reach and they killed him with their spears. Some of his blood fell down through the sky and struck the tops of the trees and bushes. Until that time trees had turned only brown and yellow in the autumn.

The brothers skinned the bear. This took more time, and more blood fell on the earth

below, much more than from just the spear wounds. So more trees and bushes, all the way to the lowest branches turned red. That is why trees turn redder and redder as autumn progresses because the bear is being skinned in the sky every autumn.

Once they had gutted and skinned the bear, the brothers quartered the meat and prepared to cook it, for they were famished. Sharpening some nearby sticks for cooking spits, and gathering up firewood (for the Sky world is not as empty as it looks from the Earth). By the time down below most of the leaves had fallen from the trees, they had begun to cook their meat.

As they cooked the meat, bear fat began to drip down and fell toward the Great Turtle through the cold winter sky. As the drops fell through the freezing air they crystalized becoming what we call snowflakes. As the Great Bear had been feeding very well on all the game around the people's villages he was very fat, and therefore great amounts of fat dripped from his flesh. The world below became blanketed in snow, and this has recurred every winter since, as the drama of the bear chase is annually repeated. What had been, until then, a grey and gloomy winter world, decorated only by icicles, was now covered with beautiful white snow. This made winter travelling easier for the people.

Thus it was that the terrible bear that had brought so much grief to the people, in the end, thanks to the three brothers who were clever enough to make spear points from a fallen star, brought many benefits to the people and life became sweeter for everybody.

* * *

Harvesting Ice

by Doris W. Hayden

Blandford, in the early part of the century, was a popular summer resort. Some owned their homes and there were also many boarders. Of course that meant the preparation of umpteen meals. The keeping of butter, milk, meat, etc., without spoilage, was vital.

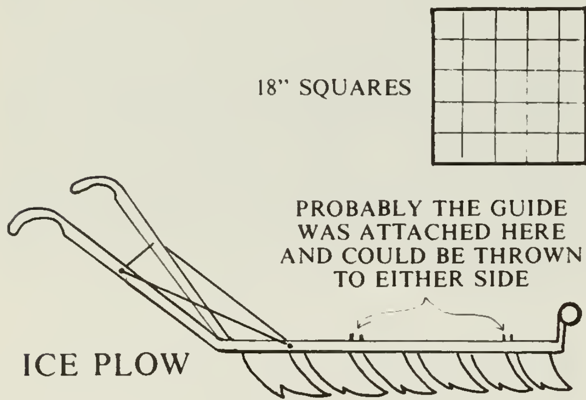
My father-in-law probably started his ice business in the early 1900's. There was a pond on his farm, so why not get a cash crop from it. As he grew older, my husband carried on the business until electric refrigeration killed the demand for ice.

Along in January or February, he would go to the pond and cut a hole to check on the thickness of the ice. When it measured 18" or 20" the time was right. Next he rounded up eight or ten men for the harvesting crew. At that time Blandford had not become a bedroom town and there were usually enough stout fellows willing to make a little spare cash.

Often the first thing to be done was to scrape the area clear of accumulated snow with a pair of horses. Sometimes luck was with him and this was not necessary. Then he scratched a straight line the length of the ice field — also another at right angles to the first. This was a guideline for the plow in marking out the ice cakes. The ice field was about 10' to 15' from the shoreline.

The plow had six blades, one ahead of the

other, fastened rigidly to the beam to which a horse was hitched. A guide extended 18" away and this ran in the first marked line. Usually two or three passes were needed to sink the cut down about 6". The plow was then moved over and the guide ran in this cut. The maneuver was repeated across the field and again at right angles. The result looked like this:



Next, one cake on the shoreline side was freed by using an ice pick. The cake was then pushed down into the water and back under the ice out of the way. This opening allowed the big ice saws to come into play. These were about 5' long, with huge teeth. A channel a bit wider than 18" was cut, extending toward the ice house.

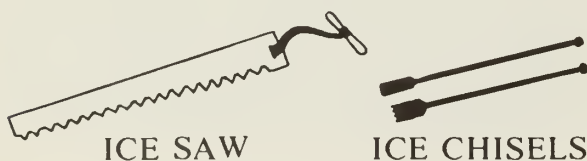
The ice house stood almost at the edge of the pond with an opening from top to bottom at the pond side. Inner walls were built about 6" from the outer walls all around. From the opening an ice run was placed with the outer end well into the water of the channel. The run was simple and looked like a chute. It was along this run that the ice was conveyed into the house. This will be explained later.

Now the ice crew began the hard work of sawing out double blocks of ice. They were 36" by 18", leaving a center groove made earlier by the plow. At first only one or two men could work until some of the cakes were pulled out, or run into the ice house. Later the work area enlarged. The blocks were sawed back 18" and then with a heavy iron ice chisel, the whole block was split off to float in the water. It was usual to cut only enough cakes each day to keep the men busy until quitting time.

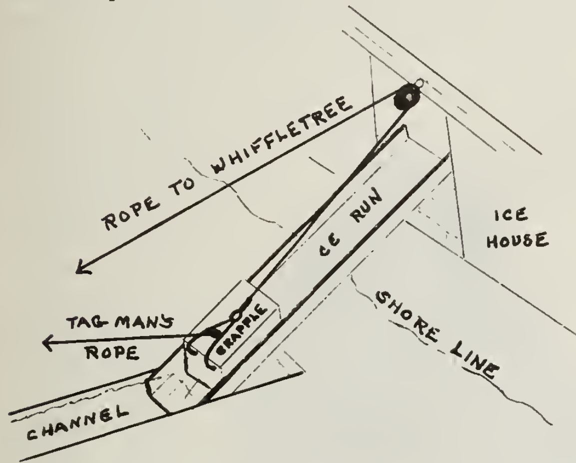
One never knew what the weatherman had up his sleeve. The next day might be ideal — fair and cold enough so the surface of the ice did not thaw and become slippery to walk on. Or a storm could dump 6" to 8" of snow overnight. This meant another session of scraping snow. If a thaw came, or rain, the ice markings filled in and later froze. Then when work could be resumed, the plowing must be done over. Thankfully these things did not always happen. Harvesting ice was as tricky as getting in a crop of hay — with the weather an enemy or an ally.

At times I liked to go down to the pond and "float" ice. This was merely guiding the big cakes along the side of the ice field as they floated in the water. One could line up several like "choo-choo cars" and once momentum was gained by the first, a second could be nudged up behind it and so on. All were headed toward the channel near the ice house. Sometimes the wind was "ornery" and blew against the line of travel — then more pushing was needed.

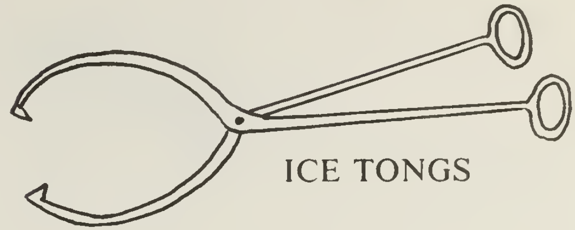
To float the cakes while standing on solid ice, pike poles were used. Some had quite long handles in order to reach out farther over the water; others were about the length of a hoe handle. At the end were sharpened pieces of metal. One pointed ahead and the other was bent backward. Thus the cake could be propelled forward by pushing, but if it got out of line the hook pulled it back into position. Once these cakes reached the channel, the first one was jockeyed into position to float over the end of the ice run, which slanted up to the ice house.



My husband was ready near the end of the run with a single horse hitched to a whiffletree. Block and tackle had previously been secured in the ice house opening. One end of the rope was hooked to the whiffletree — it then ran back over the block and returned to the end of the channel where a grapple was hooked into the back of the ice block by the "tag" man. A word to the horse and he started out on the pond, drawing the ice cake up the run into the ice house, with the tag man following alongside the run. When the ice reached the top, the tag man pulled the grapple back to the starting position. This went on all day long and the calks in the horse's shoes cut a deeper and deeper oval out and back.



In the ice house, two or three men were waiting to pack and quickly grabbed the ice with ice tongs, making use of the momentum to slide the block into position — something like packing thick dominoes in layers. The tongs used by these men had long handles so it was not necessary to stoop.



These operations went on for about a week if all went well. Then the ice crew was paid off and went home tired, but with spending money in their pockets.

My husband's part was not yet finished. He had to draw load after load of sawdust to fill in the hollow spaces between the inner and outer walls of the ice house. Also a thick layer covered the top of the ice. Fortunately in those days a sawmill was often nearby and the sawdust could be had for the taking. Once the ice was properly put to bed in this way, it would keep thru the summer and was ready to make ice cream, cool lemonade or homemade root beer, as well as keep perishable foods.

My feeling is that a man should have written this article, but this is as I recall it. I would like to give credit to Elmer Hart of Blandford for refreshing my memory about certain operations. He was many times one of the crew who worked at harvesting ice.

* * *

MONEY MUSK.

The Bates Dance Orchestra

by Florence Bates

It was a real chore to get my husband to tell how he started a dance orchestra in this vicinity, but some years before he died we had an evening of reminiscence and I gleaned a few facts.

Long before he started to play, he attended many kitchen dances where the only music was by an old time fiddler. Here in Worthington some of the hosts for these dances were Sam Hill, Will Smith, Rufus Adams, and Arthur Johnson. At Sam Hill's, the cook stove was moved to the shed and the dance started in the kitchen, but, before long, there were sets all over the house. Perhaps the fact that there were three daughters in the house was what drew such large crowds. Lou Granger from Ireland Street, Chesterfield, was usually the fiddler at Hill's.

One night Mr. Granger needed some refreshment and Mr. Hill took a quart pitcher and went to the cellar for cider. As he emerged from the cellar, he was called to another part of the house and he set the pitcher on the corner of a card table where a group of older men were enjoying a game. Needless to say, when he returned, the pitcher was empty. When the same thing happened twice, Mr. Hill went to a bedroom for the large pitcher that was a part of the toilet set, and Mr. Granger was finally able to quench his thirst.

At a party at Will Smith's, Lou Granger was fiddling. After a few sets he asked Harry (my husband) if he would spell him for a while. After playing through three sets, Harry went looking for Lou and found him playing cards in the kitchen. The question, "Who's playing for this dance, you or me?" brought Mr. Granger back on the job.

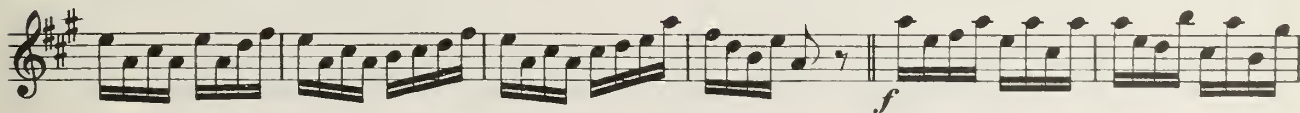
Castanus Brown was another old-time fiddler who lived and played in West Worthington. Another was Oren Gurney who lived in the house that burned when the Hotel burned in 1931. He was the great-grandfather of Ted Porter.

Soon after their marriage in 1907, Harry and Hattie Bates played all of one summer for Saturday night dances in North Chester. Organ and violin provided the music. Emerson Cushman was the prompter. The hall was very low-ceiled, and when Mr. Cushman stood on the platform, his hair brushed the ceiling and by the end of the summer there was a grease spot on the ceiling.

One Thanksgiving Eve, Harry and Julia Shaw provided the music for a dance at the Deer Hill House in West Cummington. Fred Haskins prompted. He was a good prompter but he always "teetered" as he prompted. He could call for The Lancers which most prompters found too difficult. He was not averse to putting a bit of fun into his job. At this Thanksgiving dance he told Harry and Julia to watch for special nods of his head as he prompted by *Money Musk*. The nods were for faster playing to speed up the dancing. At the end of the set, Jake Shaw (quite dressy with a white vest) sat down on the platform and said, "That's the darndest *Money Musk* I ever danced." At midnight there was a turkey supper.

At first the Bates Orchestra consisted of only Harry and Hattie, but soon there were three pieces, with Grosvenor Hewitt playing drums. The traveling was done with a horse and buggy.

The year of the all-night dance in East Windsor is not known. Bill Pierce's daughters were the instigators. It was held in a small hall where the Ancient Order of United Workmen held their meetings. It was the night before the Fourth of July and it was raining. The crowd was very slow in gathering but as the weather cleared, more



and more came. At one o'clock the orchestra was asked to play for another hour and the request was repeated at two and at three o'clock. When they finally left the hall, the sun was rising. Oscar Jacobs was the prompter that night. The hall was so small that many people stood outside while others filled the dance floor — then the crowds changed places and those outside went in and danced.

At a New Year's dance in South Worthington they played until three in the morning. Their fee was three dollars until one in the morning. For each hour after that they received one dollar each.

In the summer of 1916 the orchestra was playing for Saturday night dances in the Casino in Worthington. At one of these dances Mr. and Mrs. Henry Neil, summer residents of the older generation, danced in a Virginia Reel and complimented the orchestra on their playing.

There is a remembrance of one dance in Stanton's Hall in West Chesterfield, with Julia Shaw as pianist and Fred Cleveland playing cornet. The prompter was Charlie Drake of Cummington.

Just when the Friday night dances at Lyceum Hall in Worthington started I do not know, but for some time they were quite popular. During this time Fred Drake joined them as saxophonist.

One evening a Dalton couple heard dance music as they were driving through and stopped to investigate. The woman, Ruth Stewart, has told me of her first impressions. It was good music to dance to, but never before had she seen a leader fiddling with a pipe in his mouth and a drummer with a big cigar in his mouth. The Stewarts became regular attendants and after awhile George asked if he might play the trombone with them.

So the Bates Orchestra rose from a two-piece start to five pieces. Many times they gave their services to local organizations who needed to raise funds for various purposes. During Hattie's long illness they tried to carry on with Ruth Higgins as pianist, but after a few months they gave up.

Now those who were members of the Bates Orchestra have all departed this life. Harry was the last to go, May 21, 1971. He played the piano and banjo to within a few days of his final illness.

Our home was always full of music. We had two pianos, two violins, a banjo, mandolin, and a tenor banjo. Every day Harry played something, and anyone who could play some instrument with him was always welcome. Nima Tuttle, Dr. Conwell's daughter, spent one winter in the house now occupied by Dorothy Hewitt, and there were very few days when we were without piano and violin music. Among my most prized tape recordings are two of Harry at the piano accompanying Guy Bartlett's harmonica playing.

After the orchestra disbanded, there was a group of musicians from Chesterfield, Worthington, Dalton, and Pittsfield that met a few times a year for evenings of fun and music.

These are all delightful memories for the few of us who are left. It seems to me that it was much more fun and far more sociable than the lonely evenings we spend watching television.

Harry Bates

Everybody's Grandfather

by Geoff Lynes

Franny Wells is about six feet tall with solid white hair and a receding hairline. He wears silver-framed glasses with the top edge straight and a round lower edge. He has broad shoulders and muscular arms. He's never sloppy looking — dirty, yes, but I know that's from working constantly. He always has a clean-shaven face and a smile that lights up the whole world.

Franny is the perfect person to wake up to in the morning. He drives my school bus. If I am late, he is always there, left elbow on the steering wheel with his chin in the same hand. As soon as I get up the steps, he says, "Been up late with the girls, eh?" The usual reply is, "Who, me? Never!" or, sometimes, "You bet!"

Franny is a jack of all trades, from a school bus driver to farmer, from tool lender to maple sugar maker, woodcutter to roadside mower. He's a devoted father, grandfather, and husband. He is one of our selectmen, a cooperative and trusty ski-tow-operator, naturalist, and 4-H leader. Most important of all, he's a neighbor in the best sense of the word, as well as a friend.

As far as the friend part goes, he's your average everyday bull-ox. Personally, I would never want to tangle with him except in a friendly sparring match. These are many and usually start out like this:

"Get out of my way or I'll whup ya."

"Aw, Franny, you couldn't whup my grandmother."

"Well, I'll whup you right now!"

Then we start slap-fighting a little. I usually end up in a pile of hay or on the ground. We're both laughing, but he manages to squeeze out a phrase: "That'll learn ya!"

Of course I have to say, "I'll get you next time."

We've spent hours talking about this and that. In the spring, when I help with the sugaring, we have a grand old time in between loads of sap, just talking. Once, last year, we were talking about exotic (i.e. expensive) foods like lobster, crabs, clams, fatless steaks, bacon, and broccoli with Hollandaise sauce. Then he said, "You want to try something really good?"

"Sure," I said with a little doubt. He went into the bottling room of the sugarhouse and got a paper cup. Then he went outside and filled it with snow, came back into the sugarhouse to the evaporator and drew off some nearly-finished syrup. He put it in the cup and handed it to me. "Try that on for size." It was great! I had just enough time to finish it before we went to get another load of sap.

Franny is incredible. He is a good worker with his hands even with small things, which is odd, for he is missing his right thumb and he's right-handed. He lost the thumb sawing wood on his tilt-table saw. He caught his glove in the axle but the glove did not just slip right off. When it caught, it yanked on his whole arm, which knocked him flat on his rear end. He got up quite dazed and more or less figured to himself, "Wow! That gave my arm quite a jolt." He looked down at his hand and saw no thumb there, just a geyser of blood. The saw had pulled his thumb off. But this doesn't seem to have slowed him down very much.

Franny is also a very good neighbor. A while ago, one of our pigs was sick. Franny

came over with his handy-dandy needle and penicillin and fixed it up.

He takes care of his own animals as well. It just so happens that Franny is going to keep one of his cows for awhile because his grandaughter fell in love with it. That cow was getting sicker and sicker. Finally, Franny got a magnet, ½" x 1" x 2 ½". He put it down the cow's throat and right into its stomach, and left it there. The reason for this was that cows eat everything, including nails, wire, and anything else that is in front of them. Apparently, this cow had eaten a nail or something like it.

Poor Franny, he bought the cow for one hundred dollars and now it's only worth seventy-five, and his grandaughter wants to keep it as a pet. Franny says, "What am I going to do, Geoff? I can't keep putting hay and grain into it like this, but I can't put it in the freezer either."

We walked into the barn and as I turned the light on, I jokingly said, "Let there be light," and Franny finished that whole passage from the Bible right off the top of his head. It suddenly dawned on me that he is light for most people he knows.

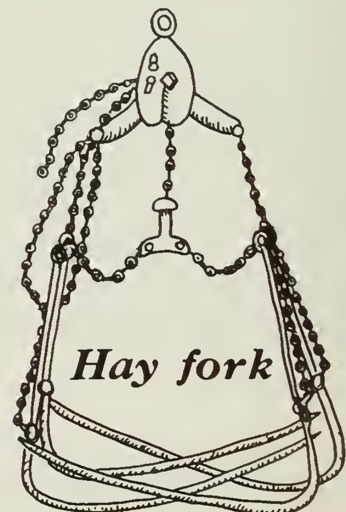
by ***Geoff Lynes***

At the end of a long hot day at the hay field, your stomach and forearms are scratched raw, your back feels broken and generally immobile. You are relaxing in the local waterfall with a bottle of beer in your hand. You begin to wonder how it used to be done without all the fancy "labor saving" equipment.

Of course things have gotten better since then: The hay loft was hotter because there was just more work to do up there and with loose hay seed floating around things were even stickier.

Some things have not changed. One thing that is just as important now as was one hundred years ago is stacking. One hundred years ago if the load was not stacked right it would slide off going over the slightest bump. Now, even with bales, if you don't stagger the tiers, you're in for trouble and nothing happens until you're out in the road and the load dumps to block traffic and everything is a mess.

Well, you made it to the barn. One problem with loading the hay into the hay loft with a hay fork and rope was that the rope was only so strong and would part. With the horses pulling on the fork that had an over-sized load and "caphlooy" there goes a half a day's work to fix and re-thread the rope. With one fork that would hold eight to ten bales worth of hay, which is about four hundred pounds, the loader had to be careful. Fortunately the fork was solid



Hay fork

and built to last.

Believe it or not Franny Wells's hay fork is not only still around but is still in working condition. The fork was a loose-jointed four-tined ice tong type of thing which hung on a track at the peak of the barn. A word of caution: Never overload the hay fork or everything goes splat! And you are late for lunch.

"My mother," Franny reminisces, "used to make a drink called 'Swichel' for lunch which was ginger, vinegar, and maple syrup. Also she served us lemonade mixed with dark maple syrup." After lunch, it was back to the hay field.

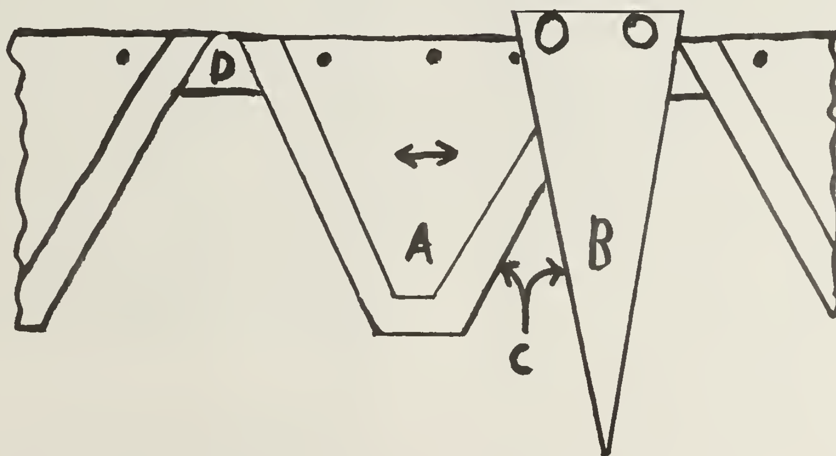
Some years later, when balers first came out, people would hire a man with a baler to come out to their farms. When he came, "you'd hope for good weather and mow down all creation," about one thousand bales a day which is about twice the usual amount done now. Franny's first baler took three people to operate: one to drive the tractor and two to tie the bales by hand. His present baler which is twenty years old and ties by itself is the second one he ever owned.

What actually happens out in the hay field? In the morning the mowing machine is the first to hit the field. The mower has several dozen triangular cutters. The conditioner follows the mower.

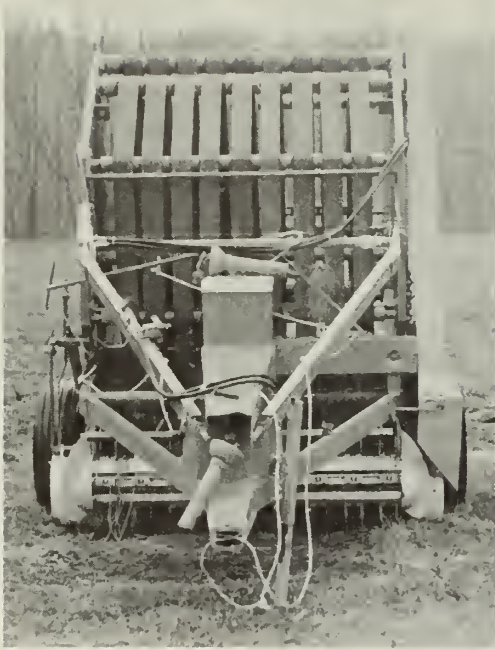
Now, if it's a very hot day and you're not running the conditioner behind the mower the hay goes limp and, if that happens, "the hay gets caught in the rollers of the conditioner in just about five seconds," says Franny. "You got a great wad of stuff you got to cut off with a knife and that's a deuce of a job." The conditioner needs no scoop to lift the hay, it just goes "sssssit" right through the rollers.

The "hay bine" is a great advantage to the haying man. This allows the hay to be cut and cured faster and thus speeds up the whole process. A conditioner picks up the hay and crushes it to force as much moisture out of it as possible before the sun goes to work on it. The hay bine is a mower and conditioner in one and if the weather is right the "wings" on the back can be pulled in. They function as a rake and guide the hay into fluffy windrows all in one shot.

Of course, if you aren't lucky enough to own a hay bine you have to run a tractor three times as long. First you have to go around the field fifty times with the mower. Then you have to do another fifty with the conditioner, otherwise known as the "crusher". You then have to go around with the rake fifty times and then bale it another fifty laps. That's two hundred runs around and you aren't finished yet. Now, go get the truck and/or the wagon and your hired help, then pick up the bales. That makes the total two hundred and fifty times around the field. With the hay bine you do the first three steps in one shot. With the hay bine



Imagine A and B as parts of scissors. B is stationary and A slides through a slot in B. As the mower moves forward the grass is forced into slot C. The cutters A are moved back and forth by the bar D.



Round bales

Round baler

you save a lot of time, and there are a lot of time-savers that go with the balers.

After the hay bine comes the baler. This mass of metal, plastic, and rubber costs about three thousand dollars, that is, the conventional style. There are, of course, other types such as the round baler which spits out a cylindrical bale that weighs about eleven hundred pounds. Another variation of the conventional baler is a bale kicker which is mounted on the back of the baler itself. These things will take a forty to fifty pound bale and throw it twenty to twenty-five feet. How does it do it? Pretty simple. There are two conveyor belts that run parallel to each other so that a bale fits between them tightly. These belts spin at very high speeds. When a bale hits these belts, it catches on the belts and goes flying into the wagon behind. Thus, the labor and time to pick them up is saved.

The reason for trying to save all this time is the later in the season, the less the protein content, and the tougher the hay gets. With a dairy herd the cheapest feed is early cut hay and this is substituted for most of their grain. July cut hay is not very good for making milk because it is low in protein. Rain is the main breaker in the haying process because if the hay is soaked and dried several times, for every drying, some of the protein is leeched out. The same thing happens to the soil if the same crop is grown in the same place year in and year out.

One problem is fertilizer. Your field would be non-yielding because hay, just like any other crop, drains the soil of nutrients. There are various ways of fertilizing. The most common way is spreading manure, which is the most used method on animal farms. If you just raise hay to sell you have to do one of two things: 1) Spread commercial fertilizer with a powder spreader, which is about a ten-foot-long trough with an agitator in the bottom over the hole. This is all on wheels and is hauled behind a tractor. Or 2) broadcast with a spray plane or a spray trailer the fertilizer. Both of these methods are also used on different crops, such as straw.

Much to people's confusion, straw and hay are not the same thing. Hay is timothy, clover, or alfalfa, mixed or separate. Straw is something quite different. It is the stalks left after a wheat harvest. Straw has no food value and is just used for bedding. It might keep a cow from starving to death, but that's it.

Storing your hay or straw in a barn can lead to some problems, the biggest of which is spontaneous combustion. According to *The World Book Encyclopedia*, spontaneous combustion is:

Burning that begins without application of flame. It takes place when oxygen in the air unites with coal, oil, or other inflammable substances. This reaction raises the temperature of the material until it bursts into flames.

The connection between this and hay is, if hay is stacked improperly, the oxygen gets where there is no ventilation, so heat gets built up and poof! There goes the barn!

So, no matter how you look at it, the job is there and it's got to be done. Better or worse, new or old, you will still be beat at the end of the day at the hay field.

* * *

Those Hearty Pioneers

by ***Betty Jean Aitken***

In 1769 a farmer's breakfast was ready long before 6 a.m. A huge bowl of corn meal mush with thick rich cream and sweetened with maple syrup, or corn meal griddle cakes with syrup, eggs, and hot strong coffee awaited him. That's not all, next came the boiled potatoes and pork.

Work on the farm was heavy and hard, but the food was plentiful and appetites hearty in Huntington.

Dinner came at noon with potatoes and meat. Fresh pork if it was winter. Ham, beef, or fish the rest of the year. There was a vegetable or two fresh from the garden in summer. And Pie! Pie was often eaten at breakfast, too.

Farmers' work ended at dark and the evening meal was often the left overs from breakfast and dinner with a huge hot Johnny cake and milk added.

Bedtime was early, candles were too valuable to waste, and the morning rolled around pretty quick.

School Committee of 1854 Blasts Town Fathers

by ***Betty Jean Aitken***

Our hilltown schools are a far cry from the schools of the earlier days. Once small school houses were sprinkled throughout the hills to accommodate the school-age youngsters that lived in the farms scattered along the country dirt roads. One teacher was responsible for the teaching of grades one through eight, and in our early history, few children reached the eighth and even fewer finished high school or entered college.

It could be said, schools were ignored in the scale of importance way back then.

But in March of 1854 the school committee of Huntington made a sweeping attack upon the town fathers concerning the conditions of the school houses in the community. It is recorded that they said, "While men are making their dwellings more pleasant, comfortable, and healthy, improving their farms, making their land more productive, the barns for their cattle and horses more tasty and elegant, and bestowing much labor and care upon the hog houses and barn yards, there is one thing which seems totally disregarded and left out of

their list of improvements, and this slighted and uncared for thing goes by the name of the "School House."

The committee went on to blast the town officials further, "Just step into one of the school houses some cold day, and there you will find a climate embracing that of every zone. Scholars whose seats are at a certain distance from the stove are blessed with a delightful temperature of the temperate zone; those situated nearer the stove are suffering all the intolerance of the torrid climate; while those more remote are undergoing all the severities of the frigid zone."

"Several of our school houses are so shabby, antiquated, and dilapidated that they are good for nothing save as curious relics of the dark ages and should be preserved only as such." They (the school committee) spoke of being roasted in one, frozen in another, smoked in a third, and sickened in impure air in the fourth.

Two district schools on Norwich Hill at that time included the one at North Hall, then called North School, and a small one at the top of Gorham Road which is now a part of the attractive home of the Gordon Richardson family. The third was most likely the Norwich Bridge school and the fourth must have been the school that was once in the Knightville area.

Our "School Girls of yesterday" pictured on the following page came along after the school committee's blast. Their school days date from the late 1800's to the early 1900's.

It was still the day before the school bus route, and there were still the wood burning stoves for heat in the winter, and the outside "comfort stations". Students either walked to school or came in a buggy. It was not uncommon to see a wagon load of youngsters arriving with books and lunch boxes. The horse was put out back in a shed and fed hay at lunchtime and given a bucket of water before his trip home in midafternoon.

These ladies admire our modern schools of today, but all admit that the one room schools they attended fit their times, and that they have many happy memories of those yesteryears.

There was a stout wooden ruler applied for discipline one recalled, and a trip to the principal's office was a disgrace in their time.

Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Blackman can well recall the old iron wood-burning stove in the center of the Norwich Bridge one-room school house, and how they all drank from a dipper in a bucket of water.

Girls wore long hair in braids and the boys loved to dip the ends in the ink well. Certain boys always seemed to get into trouble, but not serious. Clayton Kyle, who later became owner of Kyle's Department Store in the center of town, loved to put grasshoppers in the girls' desk.

At recess the children would burst forth from the Norwich Bridge School, girls dressed in long black stockings and dresses halfway below the knees, and the boys in knee pants. Mrs. Blackman's grandmother lived in the big white house next to the school (now the Gateway House) and she would run to her grandmother's for "dribble" (molasses and bread).

The late Viva Bates, who later became a school teacher, said their old farm horse was often hitched up to a sleigh to bring the Bates children to the one-room school house in the Knightville area. Later when they finished eighth grade, the old horse carried them clear down to the village to school, (where Murrayfield School now stands). Often they would have to stop and jump out and clean the snow from the horse's shoes. She said she never remembered that school was ever closed because of weather. She recalled her early school days with pleasure and said, "We never fussed about the cold."

Gradually there weren't enough students to keep the little school houses open, and so they were closed, one after another. In later years, the one in Knightville was removed in the Dam project. North School in North Hall has been kept in repair all through the years. Special suppers, meetings, and chuch bazaars are held in this building.

The Norwich Bridge School was not quite as lucky. A woman's club met there for awhile, and later an art class, but for many years it has been abandoned.

A few years ago a spark of hope was lit to restore this old landmark, but after a dis-

Standing: Dorothy Munson Blackman, Isabelle Fisk
Seated: Sadie Cooper, Mrs. Orel Manley, Helen Buguey

pute over actual ownership of the land, hope seemed to fade away till now. The new owners of the property have offered it to the town and it may soon become an exciting bicentennial project.

George Beals, who now lives on Worthington Road, just down the road from the little school, was among the last class to attend this school. He, too, has many fond memories of his schooldays there. He recalls how his teacher, Mrs. Grace Fisk Field, allowed the boys to gather sap and boil it on the school stove. She often gave prizes to the first student who brought her wild flowers in the spring.

At that time a covered bridge crossed the river and the school boys tossed snow onto the bridge so the sleighs could ride through. He said classes were small and often there were only two students in each grade. All walked to school in his time, and sometimes had to wade through huge snow drifts in the Winter to attend. The big boys kept the fire going all day, Beals recalled, and to him it always seemed cozy and warm.

Beals said he always felt he learned more in the little one-room school house than he ever did in the larger one in the village.

George Beals

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"These walls are not all made to keep things out or in. Some just start here and there; a place to put the first stone and a place for the last." – Zenon D'Astous